



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3004503

Applicant Name: Tom Johanson, Architect, for Mars Hill Graduate School

Address of Proposal: 2501 Elliott Avenue

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Change of use of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors of the existing south building from of the existing south building from 11,220 sq. ft. of warehouse and 21,180 square feet of mini-warehouse to 32,400 square feet of an institutional use for Mars Hill Graduate School. No changes are proposed for the lower level, which will remain warehouse and mini-warehouse.

The following approvals are required:

SEPA - Environmental Determination - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code (SMC)

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☒ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS
☐ DNS with conditions
☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or
involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The site is zoned Downtown Harborfront 2 with a 65 foot height limit (DH2-65). It is an upland lot of which only the western portion is within the Urban Harborfront (UH) Shoreline Environment. The site consists of a full block, bounded by Elliott Avenue to the east, Alaskan Way to the west, Vine Street to the north and Wall Street to the south. To the west of Alaskan way lies Elliott Bay. The site is rectangular in shape, approximately 119.9 feet wide and 240.06 feet in length, and is fully developed to the property lines with a building consisting of two abutting structures. The south building, where the proposed change of use is occurring, was most recently used as a warehouse and mini-warehouse.

Development in the vicinity consists of a mixture of mostly old and new commercial structures along the waterfront (Alaskan Way) and along Elliott Avenue. Properties immediately to the east, across Elliott Avenue, include the Belltown P-patch and an historic landmark known as the Belltown Cottages.

Proposal Description

The applicant proposes to change the use of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors of the existing south building from 11,220 sq. ft. of warehouse and 21,180 square feet of mini-warehouse to 32,400 square feet of an institutional use for Mars Hill Graduate School.

The total building height and the footprint would remain the same. No expansion is proposed. The proposed change of use of the existing 32,400 sq. ft. space will mostly involve interior alterations. Some upper exterior windows are proposed to be uncovered.

Public Comments

The public comment period ended on 10 May 2006, and no comments were received.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the annotated environmental checklist (dated, March 16, 2006), and supplemental information in the project file submitted by the applicant's agent. The information in the checklist, the supplemental information, and the experience of the lead agency with the review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans, and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states, in part, "Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" subject to some limitations. Under such limitations/circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

Construction Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: minor decreased air quality due to suspended particulate from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise, and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Street Use

Ordinance requires debris to be removed from the street right-of-way, and includes regulations for maintaining circulation in the public right-of-way. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures in general. Finally, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the city. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts to the environment. Most of these impacts are minor in scope and are not expected to have significant adverse impacts (SMC 25.05.794). However, due to the close proximity of neighboring residences and businesses, further analysis of construction impacts is warranted. The following is an analysis of the short-term impacts to the environment as well as mitigation.

Noise

Surrounding residential uses are likely to be slightly impacted by noise throughout the duration of construction. Due to the proximity of residential uses, the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be inadequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675B), additional mitigation is warranted.

To reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, construction activities shall generally be limited to non-holiday weekdays between 7:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby residences, only low noise impact work will be permitted on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Sundays from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Hours on weekdays may be extended from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on a case by case basis. All evening work must be approved by the DPD planner prior to each occurrence.

Construction on the individual enclosed floors can be done at other times in accordance with the Noise Ordinance. Such construction activities will have a minimal impact on residents living in the vicinity of the construction. Restricting the ability to conduct these tasks would extend the construction schedule, thus the duration of associated noise impacts.

DPD recognizes that there may be occasions when critical construction activities could be performed in the evenings and on weekends, which are of an emergency nature or related to issues of safety, or which could substantially shorten the total construction time frame if conducted during these hours. Therefore, the hours may be extended and/or specific types of construction activities may be permitted on a case by case basis by approval of the Land Use Planner (Samantha Updegrave 206-684-3151) prior to each occurrence. Periodic monitoring of work activity and noise levels may be conducted by DPD.

Parking Demand During Construction

Parking on adjacent streets is highly utilized, with peak utilization during the day and occasionally the evening hours. Short term adverse impacts to on-street parking availability are expected due to additional parking requirements for construction workers, materials and equipment. SEPA policies preclude mitigating the development on parking availability in Downtown Seattle. (25.05.6752b)

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are not anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased bulk and scale on the site; noise, traffic or parking in the area; demand for public services and utilities; and light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site collection of stormwater with provisions for controlled tight line release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies. However, due to the location of this proposal, additional land use impacts which may have long term affects are discussed below.

Parking

The Downtown Code 23.49.016 2A allows an exception to parking requirements in that no parking shall be required for new uses to be located in existing structures, or when existing structures are remodeled. Furthermore, 25.05.675M2B states that no SEPA authority is provided to mitigate the impact of development on parking availability in the downtown zones.

Traffic

A condensed traffic analysis summary was prepared by William Popp, Jr. of William Popp and Associates, dated March 15, 2006.

With future expansions of staff and student body, it is estimated that this institutional use will generate approximately 404 daily trips by the year 2010. An estimated 23 trips will occur between 4 P.M. – 6 P.M., during the peak period on streets surrounding the project. The peak hour for the use is 6 P.M. – 7 P.M. and 77 trips will be generated during that time. The analysis submitted did not adjust the estimated vehicle trips per day for the multi-modal options, such as transit and biking, that are available and likely to be utilized at this location. Due to the level of service of the surrounding streets, proximity to transit, and other multi-modal opportunities, the noted traffic-related impacts are not considered significant.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official, on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(C).
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

CONDITIONS – SEPA

During Construction

The following condition(s) to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right of way. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other weatherproofing material and shall remain in place for the duration on construction.

The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall:

1. To reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, construction activities shall generally be limited to non-holiday weekdays between 7:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby residences, work will be permitted on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Sundays from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Construction work proposed outside these established hours must be approved by the DPD planner (Samantha Updegrave 206-684-3151) prior to each occurrence. Construction on the individual enclosed floors can be done at other times in accordance with the Noise Ordinance.

Signature: _____ (signature on file)
Samantha Updegrave, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: June 15, 2006